



The fabulous cover for THIS- the 125th DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW- was created by the highly mysterious conceptual artist called simply RICK FROM SINGAPORE. Verily, he TRULY is the mysterion of the Asian art world....

KENTA KOBASHI! wrestles for possibly the last time! JOE MALENKO! SILVER KINGS! HEADHUNTERS (kinda)! show up for the CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS! DEAN! finally got a copy of BANDITS! vs. BODYGUARDS! XPW! CACTUS JACK! VADER! ONES TO WATCH!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #125!

Sometimes I wonder about the love I have for writing about the Professional Wrestling- is it really all just a beautiful dream like the dream where you are rolling in the arms of a person you loved years ago and you are in bliss about the new feeling created out of old feelings. Or is it real and brand new- everchanging like motor oil prisms in a mud puddle? I think I'll never know- so let your loving playaz ply you with our sweet sweet love of the Grappling Arts. It's ME at the point, so DIG IT.....

~!~

!@!@!@!@!@!@! NEW JAPAN TELEVISION- 1/4/2001, TOKYO DOME
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Hangman Tim was at this card, eating elephant ears, getting liquored up in the Tokyo Dome Courtesy Lounge and putting the blast on hot Japanese supermodels in the broom closet during

the Nakanishi match. I'm just guessing here. Either way, that's what he SHOULD say he was doing. I mean, wrestling at a dome has to be the shittiest way to ever see wrestling. There is a big difference between a Standing Switch and jumping 18 buses with a motorcycle. (Well, less of a difference if one of the folks doing the Standing Switch is El Felino, but I digress...) Here it is, the first big show of 2001. It's tournament matches for the IWGP Heavyweight Championship and more matches featuring the comically unretired Riki Chosyu.

Satoshi Kojima vs Kensuke Sasaki:

This is in highlight form, showing the really great highlight of Kojima doing one of the best fat boy topes in the history of wrestling, ripping up his face for your bloody pleasure as he smashes facefirst into the guardrail- and it looks like a match that I wanna see all of. Kojima and Sasaki have a good high-end New Japan Heavyweight match with big spots- with the added new Kawada wrinkle of a couple nasty suplexes by Sasaki as he is really fired up these days- as he seems to realize that he can make up for his initial dubious run as IGPW champion, if he can use this giant head of steam that he's mustered while feuding with Kawada to make a lasting impression. Here he makes Kojima look good, taking a man-sized beating by leaning into Kojima's lariats and a very gnarley fatboy Michinoku Driver before procuring the Boston Crab on young Kojima for the finish, after hitting a cool Judo throw, into a big lariat, into a SWANK Northern Lights Bomb. Uh-oh... I feel myself being drawn back into New Japan Heavyweight wrestling.....

Yoshihiro Tenzan vs Yuji Nagata:

This was clipped and I wanna see all this, too. This starts stiff as all fuck as they elbow each other upside the head until Yuji does a FABULOUS Somersault Heel Kick right to Tenzan's face and IT FUCKING RULES! (Remember the good old days when we used to bitch about Nagata never getting a win over Ultimo Dragon when they would wrestle for 12 minutes on WCW Saturday night? HAHAAHAHAHA! We were such fucking cretins....) Tenzan hits a Diving Headbutt and begins bleeding hardway- allowing Nagata the opening for the second Nagata Lock of the match, as the basis of the match (from what is shown) is that Nagata is faster and better at striking and can get an advantage on Tenzan that way. Tenzan is bigger and stronger and is resilient enough to escape the submission holds of Nagata and- in the end- a small opening for Tenzan allows him to hit his fucking HIDEOUS looking Viagra Driver and crush Nagata with a fat boy Moonsault. Yeah, I'm back into New Japan Heavyweights...

Masa Chono vs Kensuke Sasaki:

Well THIS match is problematic. The beginning is very All Japanish, but in the worst way. They take turns doing five different versions of the most irritating component of All Japan psychology- the ability for any wrestler to delay selling a big move if he wants to get his own big move in before selling the previous move. The problem with trying to hate this match is that Chono is so fucking brilliant at putting matches together that if you buy the bizarre concept of the delayed selling, then the whole match is a perfectly executed New Japan Heavyweight match. All Sasaki's moves destroy Chono's back and he REALLY destroys Chono's back. Chono's offense works towards the STF- even with a feigned and redirected Yakuza Kick to take out Sasaki's knee. WHAT'S A WRESTLING FAN TO DO? From here, the Chono transition to offense by not

selling a Superplex for very long and getting to his feet before Sasaki can get to his and getting a Yakuza kick in to set up the STF is faulty but not as heinous as it would seem to be. Chono buffers it with Saski hitting a Powerslam and a lariat and then Sasaki getting hit with the same Superplex set-up that crushes Chono. Thus the STF is set-up logically, if not sold particularly well. Sasaki hits the ropes and hits lariats to hit his powerbomb. Chono fights out of another Powerbomb by splaying out so Sasaki hits a pretty gnarley Piledriver and thus- for the first time ever- the Strangle Hold Gamma- the weak sister to the Stretch Plum- FINALLY looks like it would cause someone to tap out. And Chono does. Hey guys- SELLING SELLING SELLING. In VOLUME VOLUME VOLUME! That's the key to good wrestling. Fuck, I don't know. You can only get so mad at New Japan heavyweights for selling shittily at this point. It's like getting mad at your dog for getting into the trashcan in the kitchen while you are away.

Toshiaki Kawada vs Yoshihiro Tenzan:

Holy Fuck, MORE HARDWAY. Kawada and Tenzan are making with the knife edged chops and Tenzan crushes Kawada's skull with a headbutt and Kawada does the cool Baffled By The Horrible Pain Slow Falling Sideways sell and blood trickles from the point of impact of Tenzan's forehead. So New Japan is becoming great? This is the new world of Kawada showing the New Japan Heavyweight punx how to wrestle a compelling New Japan match. Tenzan is an intriguing prospect for a lengthier match with Kawada because Tenzan truly is the BEST POSSIBLE TAMON HONDA that God could ever create- as his headbutt-based stylings are all blood-producing and funtabulous. Plus they really beat the ever-loving shit out of each other for a minute there. This is clipped to hell, but luckily they left in Tenzan's big big diving headbutt. Luckily they also left in my favorite moment in wrestling so far this year: after a toprope backdrop follows up on Tenzan smashing into Kawada with said diving headbutt, Kawada does the Flair Beg Off-Like Stumble To The Ground Into The Corner after Tenzan tries an Irish Whip. Tenzan knocks him back into the corner with a left armed lariat and then a right-armed lariat. At this point, Kawada says to himself, "Oh, that's right! I'm the toughest motherfucker in the world" and he walks over and punches Tenzan right in the face. It was absolutely balls out. Your finish: Kawada with a powerbomb set up by Kawada kicking Tenzan right in the motherfucking face. Jillion, Bazillion stars.

Riki Choshu vs Shinya Hashimoto:

This match I went in assuming would deepthroat the beefdart to great excess- but it actually has moments that are really great, but these moments of greatness are more offset by HUGE goatblowing wads of suck that is the ending of this. Up until that point, this is a pretty spirited batch of major league ass-beating. Hashimoto is half a step from being back in the top ten because the outsider asshole role is really suiting him- a role that he is lifting from the bizarre near-career-ruining feud with Ogawa- with Hash himself reprising the Ogawa ass-beating dick role- but with the TRULY inspired stable of Zero One, the stable with the promise of totally fabulous Hashimoto and Otsuka invasion angles all over the Noah-New Japan-All Japan landscape. Hash starts the match as the Puroresu Lawler, making with the stall of stalls- refusing to come to the middle ring, generating huge wads of old fashioned heel heat. Riki is suitably unamused and Hash takes it to the Zbysko-esque level by actually getting out of the ring and walking down the ramp. Hash is all pissed but subtle in his hatred and need for

revenge and when he explodes into Chosyu and starts beating Grampa to within an inch of his life by just punching him in the face forty times. It's obvious that Hash has re-invented himself into an ass-stomper that will make him the number one wrestler in my heart for the rest of this decade. When the ass-stomp kicks in, it is motherfucking beautiful as Chosyu gets Hash over big by inhaling a gigantic beating before firing back on Hash's much less fatter ass and moving the match along. Chosyu gets in some stiff cranky shots in before collapsing back to sell the damage. Hash reapplies the ass-stomp and Chosyu counters out of a no-win situation by hitting a backdrop to set up a Riki Lariat- all of which Hash sells perfectly like one would expect from a master. Hash gets the fucking gnarley transition back to offense with a truly UGLY looking DDT. Then Hash starts teeing off until Chosyu desperately garners the spirit to chop his way out and buy some time with a lariat. Hash fucking NAILS Chosyu in the motherfucking throat with the point of his boot and follows up with a just as vicious of a kick to the chest. Riki gets in one final flurry before Hash really starts to REALLY start beating the fuck out of him. Chosyu gets one last lariat before Tatsumi Fujinami somehow calls for bell and the inexplicably shitty non-finish ruins what was a billion star ass-beating in progress. This match was so good up to the finish that the ending will really piss off any viewer. It was a really shitty booking decision that is indefensible and then to top it off then was poorly executed because I'm guessing Fujinami was supposed to make it look like Riki was in danger of losing or something. I'm guessing because there is NO WAY they wanted what they got for an ending because this ending sucks donkey balls. Great Great Great turns into complete shit shit shit.

Toshiaki Kawada vs Kensuke Sasaki:

This wasn't nearly as good as their first meeting- which was a completely gorgeous match- as this was shorter and less harrowing, but still a good match by the end. It's kinda divided up into three sections like the first meeting, but the stiffness is replaced by more selling on both ends, as Sasaki sells the damage inflicted by Kawada at the beginning of the match far better than I'm used to seeing him sell (in that he actually accumulatively sells by the end so that the psychology of the selling slows down the workrate to a standstill by the seventh minute). Kawada goes for the quick pin early and lays in the kicks early but can't finish Kensuke off with his powerbomb, but stays on offense until Sasaki can finally overwhelm Kawada with a batch of big ass lariats and his own stiff kicks. So they condense the first eight minutes of their first match against each other into the first three minutes of this match. Kawada gets his first transition to offense by countering out of a suplex and somersaulting into a heelkick. Sasaki hits a powerslam counter to a Kawada Lariat attempt but Kawada fights out of a Northern Lights Bomb and hits a nasty looking Released German Suplex and Lariat combining to start the final batch of kicks before the last two minutes of finishers start with a Stretch Plum that kinda fizzles out in the middler of the ring. Kawada punts Sasaki's face and finally gets the powerbomb that he hopes will finish Sasaki but Sasaki kicks out. They repeat the Block/ Kick right to the face/ Powerbomb attempt but Sasaki backdrops Kawada out and gets his first submission attempt with a Boston Crab until Kawada makes the ropes. Kawada jumps up and kicks Sasaki in the face but has enough to meet Kawada's lariat with his own and stays on his feet- allowing him to club Kawada into position for his own Released German to set up his Northern Lights for the pin. This was far more conventional New Japan Heavyweight style, as the story was really simple and not the subtle, masterful variation on the New Japan

heavyweight style norm like their first match- mostly due to it being kept to ten minutes and thus compressing the action to a more superficial level. This match was perfectly fine, but not as essential as their other one. Kawada versus Tenzan was more fun and Sasaki vs Kojima was probably more fun if the whole match is available, but I got no real beef with this one. This show is more about the suddenly promising, nearly burgeoning New Japan Heavyweight situation than about being anything you really need to see right now.

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\$%\$%\$%\$%\$% APPLLE - 4/20/2000

(RAY DUFFY)

APPLLE was an indy show that was run around the spring Chiller Theatre Expo as Hijo Del Santo. I think the paid attendance for the show was like 28, but who fucking cares, I was at this show and I got to see Hijo del Santo fucking tear it up live. So when October rolled around, I actually bought a copy of the show and here it is.

Match 1 : Ghetto Matt Shaft vs. Lil Cholo vs. Hijo del Genio

Ghetto Matt Shaft is a white guy doing a hip hop gimmick (he looks like he should be a metal dude) from Anahiem, CA. Lil' Cholo does a Cholo gimmick, Hijo del Genio is a 14 year old worker. At the start, Cholo and Genio work together against Shaft before then screw up a double team and end up on the floor and catching a pescado. This was a pretty good match. Nothing was seriously blown and for someone who probably wasn't wrestling that long, Genio did a few neat elaborate lucha armdrags. Cholo hit a nice sky-high on Shaft and ended up getting the win following a Michinoku Driver II and a second rope somersault senton for the win.

Match 2 : Chango Loco vs. Rev Axl Future

This match was.... not good. Both guys seemed off, with the small crowd, you could really hear in the ring, so the mic's picked up a lot of the banter the wrestlers had with each other, the crowd and the ref, but also picked up a few called spots. It also sounded like both guys blew up.

Match 3 : Compton Street Fight : King Jakal/Black Metal vs. The Hit Squad (Monsta Mack/Mafia)

This is a street fight that starts out with an armdrag sequence, what's not to love. There's a bunch of wrestling in the early part of this which is fun, eventually it breaks down and you get the fight in the crowd. Given that about half the crowd was on our side of the ring, they decided to destroy all the chairs on our side. Black Metal hits a nice Miracle ecstasy in ring as the West Coast team takes to the ring and starts double teaming before the other hit squad guy toasts Jakal with a keyboard. The finish comes when one of the Hit Squad hits the other with a kendo stick by mistake, they end up throwing one out to the floor and getting the pin following a senton. This was a fun little match.

Match 4 : Mike Quackenbush/Mariachi Loco v. Low-Ki/Hijo Del Santo

Mariachi Loco has the greatest current lucha indy scum mask as it's a mask with trumpet horns and a crazy tongue sticking out. Quackenbush and Low-Ki start out and do a bunch of nice reversal spots of various armbars and holds, with each coming up with a move, an escape and a counter on the mat for a bit. Santo and Mariachi do some stuff, including Santo's handstand headscissor move. Quack and Low-Ki tag in, Quack goes for ASARI's lawndart kick which misses by a bit, but gets sold, Low-Ki comes up with a with his handspring overhead roundhouse kick move. The first dive is by Quackenbush with a tope con hilo following a hip toss to the floor on Low-ki. The technicians get the first fall with Low-Ki hitting a 450 on Quackenbush and Santo hitting a rana on Mariachi. Second fall starts with Quack and Mariachi hitting a buch of double teams on Low-Ki taking over on him for a bit til Santo tags in. Santo gets worked over for a bit, but ends up countering the double teams and hitting a great tope on Quackenbush, while he's out Mariachi scores a pin with a powerbomb on Low-Ki. Third fall starts with some more work between Low-Ki and Quackenbush, Mariachi gets in a neat Octagon special on him. There's a segment where someone puts on a submission hold and their partner makes the save only to have the tables reversed. Santo and Low-Ki hit a Doomsday Device on Quackenbush followed by a La Tapatia by Santo. The end comes down to Santo and Quackenbush as Santo hits him with a flying headbutt and el Caballo for the win. A very fun match, the pacing was good, things went moving, there were only one or two flubbed spots, otherwise a very good match. Nice to see guys not mail it in given the crowd size.

Match 5 : High Performance Tournament

Basically, an every man for himself match with everyone from the undercard except for Chango Loco. This just sort of was tossed out there. Black Metal hits a neat Rock Bottom on Future. They do a bit where the Hit Squad have to fight each other before they eventually take off continuing to fight with Metal and Jakal on the floor. Shaft ends up hitting an X-Factor on Genio for the win.

Extra matches :

4/14/2000

Jalisco Rojo v. Tommy Idol

Jalisco Rojo is Quackenbush doing a goofy comedy gimmick under a hood. This takes place inside of a kids playground with a ball pit and one of those bouncy balloon things, which results in both guys fighting into and doing spots in there. There's only one handheld for the show so often is doing a lot of running around the ring and stuff to get shots. Idol does a claw spot twice in the match which gets broken by shoving his hand off. Idol breaks out the dreaded cabbage patch elbow and walkin' man leg drop. Rojo does the Naniwa rope walk and misses because I think he's a rudo. He also does the move them across the ring spot for the big splash on one bounce move and a rolling cradle and a giant swing. The finish comes with a series of reversals ending with a back drop countered into a powerbomb attempt countered into a hurricanrana into a sunset flip for the pin.

Black Metal/Mariachi Loco vs. Ice King/Hijo Del Santo

Ice King is kind of a doughy guy but he hits one or two neat off the ropes flying moves. This was pretty eh as there isn't much crowd heat. Metal and Mariachi do a bunch of non-discript

double teaming. Eventually, Santo hits a tope to the floor, hits the flying headbutt and el Caballo for the win. Something happened to Ice King during the match as they mentioned they had to cut the match short due to it.

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Phil Rippa's Ones To Watch in 2k+1

Scoot Andrews

Someone has to have the claim of the Best US Indy Worker and with Mike Modest and Christopher Daniels signing with WCW the debate will start anew. Scoot Andrews fits the bill nicely. Reckless Youth might be another candidate but he has been bouncing around for awhile and his act is starting to get stale (maybe a product of not hitting the big time.) Andrews has worked several federations across the country - this has helped get his name out and the diversity of his opponents has helped him develop that ability to work various styles. He also isn't afraid to dump someone right on his head. Andrews had fine showings at both the 2000 Super 8 and APW King of the Indies. Trained in Florida, Scoot avoided learning THE CLAW and instead learned actual wrestling which will help in more ways than anyone can actually count. Andrews could quite easily get himself a contract by the end of the year and it will be well deserved.

Ray Gonzalez

There is a reason that Carly Colon is going to be a pretty good wrestler - Ray Gonzalez. Gonzalez is the best wrestler none of you have ever seen, as Dean, Phil and I are the only ones who watch the Puerto Rico tapes. (You are also missing out on Kendall Windham Baby.) Gonzalez is the perfect foil for Colon. He is so solid that he can corral the spotatstic Colon and make coherent matches. Gonzalez is very much the Puerto Rican Triple H, as he doesn't do anything tremendously spectacular, instead favoring a more traditional, mat based, psychological heavy style. Hell also sells like a mother. Gonzalez plays an excellent heel often inciting the crowd to hurl trash and to get the grannies really riled up. I actual think that people like Ric Flair and Rick Rude heavily influenced Gonzalez as you can see subtle similarities in the ring. You can also tell the Gonzalez cuts a pretty mean promo (despite the fact that I understand maybe every 40th word. Actually, it is kinda funny the promos he does with One Man Gang as he flips between English and Spanish and the results are really comical.) You all need to get your hands on lots of WWC. It is full of good, bad, weird, blood and... well... you will have to sit through One Man Gang vs. Carlos Colon in Hell's Version of Wrestling..

Osaka Pro

Well, since Dick Togo and the boys split town (By the way - it is good to see that Togo has found a place that will pay him even LESS money to wrestle. And have we ever gotten the full story on the big breakup?), the federation has been almost in a state of limbo. What direction will the company take? I expect Delfin to do some talent raids (Osaka, DDT, anyone). Plus, they have already established a Comedy Title which is just too cool and far into the realm of bizarro to give up. So expect a lot of Monster invasion's and the never-ending Ebessan vs. Kamen feud. The

promotion will never truly go under since it is Japan. Worse case scenario, we will just be getting Osaka Restart tapes.

@#@@#@#@# Jun Akiyama vs Kenta Kobashi- NOAH 12/23/2000
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

This is- in all probability- the last great Kenta Kobashi match- as he is absolutely broken down physically and may need a whole new knee and may be done for good. If that is the sad truth, then it's a small consolation that this is a pretty good way to go out, I guess. The Akiyama Better Late Than Never push is in full fruition. This match is already starting at 700 stars just because Jun Akiyama is wearing the Greg Valentine/ Ric Flair robe that FUCKING ROCKS THE GODDAM WORLD. Kobashi comes out and his knee braces adds to his pale complexion to show a man who is a physical shell of the astounding physical performer from 1993. But fuck all that for now- the first sequence is executed to perfection as each blocks the big move of the other and leads up to the classic All Japan knuckle-lock beginning to bring the beauty of the rest of the match. Jun Northern Lights Suplexes his way out and hits a spear and gets the mount until Kenta makes the rope. Kenta fires back with some fat ass smacks to the head that he finishes off with a nasty Urican. They take it to the floor and Kobashi- the physical shell- still bumps like a freak as he flies over the rail onto his head and then across his throat and chest. Jun catches him as he gets back in the ring and rains down a flurry of motherfucking HARSH Dusty-styled elbows into Kobashi's shoulders and hits a High Knee and then a DDT on the ramp and THEN hits a Sprinting Rolling Elbow down the ramp. Kobashi is dead. Kobashi fights out of being suplexed back into the ring and counters with a GREAT sustained in mid-air Brainbuster in the TRUE Dick Murdock mold- and THEN hits a Face Crusher jumping off the ramp, slamming Jun's into the ramp. Now Jun is dead. Kenta plants him with a DDT in the middle of the ring anyway and Jun sells it with the limp tripod sell that I love so well. Kenta slows down the onslaught of Big Ass Spots by procuring a chinlock that he wrenches around in a real hurty way- to let you know that he isn't Bryan Adams or something. We get back to the blitzkrieg of hellish moves as Kenta hits the SWANK front facelock suplex for two. Jun tries to counter an Irish Whip into a High Knee but Kenta counters and goes back to the chinlock and then the headlock, keeping it on after the Backdrop by Jun. Hmmmm, I'm wondering if a smarter, more methodical match by Kenta will part of his Chono-ization after he comes back in (possibly) January. It helps the psychology of this match. Jun then goes directly for the right knee with two nasty dropkicks. Kenta no-sells a lariat, Jun no-sells a Tequila Sunrise Suplex and then Kenta no-sells an Exploider and Jun high knees him to the floor and double stomps him as Kenta tries to stand up. He then rides Kenta's right arm into the rail off apron, driving his knee into Kenta's tricept. Thus Kenta has one whole side of his body worn down. Jun puts on an armbar and accents it with a fabulous keylock through the ropes. Jun kicks his arm and Kenta can't fight out and becomes victim of an Akiyama Cross-Armbreaker attempt that Jun turns into a Short-Arm Scissors and then gets into a full Cross Arm-breaker before Kobashi hits the ropes. Jun does fucking BEAUTIFUL pumphandle of Kobashi's arm across the part of the turnbuckle that hooks into the ringpost and then drapes Kenta's arm through the rail and kicks it for full effect. Kenta crawls back in the ring and catches another Pumphandle. Jun tries another pumphandle but Kenta hits a BIG Tequila Sunrise Suplex and goes on offense. Jun backdrops out of a Piledriver but can't fight out of Kenta hitting a DEEPLY ugly looking neck-crushing Tequila Sunrise on the

ramp. Kenta stops the count on the corpse of Jun and drags him into the ring, hits a Powerbomb into a bridge for two. Kenta's eye is swelling shut at this point but he still has plenty left to hit a Full Vertical Press Into An Ace Crusher. Jun tries to make a transition by attempting an Exploder but Kenta counters and crushes him with a Lariat. Jun finally gets a transition by hitting a powerbomb as Kenta goes up for a Moonsault. Jun hits a high knee to the back of Kenta's head and goes for the Exploder off the apron but Kenta blocks it despite Jun's kicks to his right knee and they both sprawl to the floor. The NOAH production crew then totally AAA Jun doing SOMETHING off the apron to drive Kenta over the guardrail. Jun looks fucking CRAZED as he hits an Exploder on the floor and Kobashi looks like a total wreck- unmoving and his eye swollen shut. Jun stops the ref's count and drags Kenta into the ring and hits a Double Underhook DDT to set up a toprope Rolling Elbow. Jun follows with another Exploder and goes for a front choke but Kenta gets a foot in the ropes- looking like he's been hit by a mack truck. Another High Knee to the back of the head and Kenta is trying to fight out the Exploder but Jun turns it into a Northern Lights Bomb for two. Jun drags Kenta to the toprope and Kenta lariats his way out of a toprope Exploder attempt and they both collapse to the ground. Kenta gets the Lariat in as they make it their feet and gets a two count. He hits an even BIGGER Lariat for two but he also selling the effects of the damage inflicted earlier. Jun elbows him in the head but Kenta counters with a Urican that drives Jun into the corner and sets him up for the fucking most HELLISH move I've seen in a while- as Kenta fucking KILLS Jun with a totally vertical-landing Burning Hammer right on his head. When I see matches like, I'm amazed that any of these guys wrestle past 30 years old. This was at totally different level than anything I've seen in a while. I've got little criticisms about the wandering selling and the one sequence of no-selling, but I can't argue with the sheer will of doing a match with as many BIG and horribly crippling moves as this. I guess it's either fitting or ironic that this should be Kobashi's final great match because ten of these matches between 1997 through 2000 is what made him the physical nightmare that he is right now. I guess his consolation for his fate can be taken in that he had more healthy years than Chono had before joining Masa Chono as a formerly great worker who is now one of the Wrestling Wounded. Great fucking match, damn us all to hell.

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ANTHONY GANCARSKI

Terry Gordy [as told to Anthony Gancarski] holds forth about a 2:38 C&E sequence that began a mid-80s WCCW match he had "with television time remaining" against King Kong Bundy.

So, what the fuck. They tell Bundy and me to go out there because some Adkisson bitch is pissed off about some bullshit and doesn't want to go on and work Iceman King Parsons. Fill up 7 minutes, I get told, and I wanted to jump his ass but I'm thinking I need this payout because I've got bills to pay, goddamnit. So I just nod and go out there. No fucking issue between us. No fucking nothing. Bundy and I didn't have jack shit time to work out a fucking match; God only

knew what DDP would've done if he were out there. Self high five love me hate me fear me bullshit; Page told me WCW'd bring me in back when things were hot a couple years back, let me work Hogan or work him and go over and get a run. Not that I was what I once was, even then. But I could still go, enough to get by. So Page ducked me and months went by and Page didn't call me so kiss my ass Page.

Bundy. He and I locked up, collar and elbow, and he pushed me around the ring, into the ropes. Then we walked back out, and it was like school dances on those black and white cathode chronicles of our civilization, defiantly whitewashed even as Americans became ever more divided through desire incipient and would you like to give me my bottle bkac bakc back.

Bundy and I stayed in the coll-and-elbow forbidden dance, tempting fate almost. His arms have always had this comely firmness, a synthesis of sinew and porcine flesh that makes one want to hold him and go deeper into

FREE RIDES ON MAMA GORDY!
FREE RIDES ON MAMA GORDY!

30 seconds had elapsed. 330 seconds remained.

Yes, I'll have seconds, the twinkle of Bundy's eyes suggested in the reflection of the glistening of his sweat on his defiantly UNenigmatic sateen black singlet. But hold me now the rough callouses of his palms suggested.

And I thought of PS [dokdokdok]
Prissy Purely Sexy Sissy
seducing sterile Shirley surely
simple set solution
99.44 % pure, +/- 3.6ppg/d+s[3.45]

And Bundy's arms held me
alabaster shards
of granite, rickety-shivered
sad-veiled bride handsome
groom
boom boom
let's go back to my ECdub ECdub
NO
I will NOT blow Dave Scherer.

But this was 1984, and Bundy and I might as well have been singing Hold Me Now to each other 'in that squared circle'. His playful Oscar Meyer weiner fingers tousled the curls of my hair, which were damp with mousse and the

hard-won perspiration of professional simulators locked in simulation. Note the internal rhyme there, Buddy Roberts, you illiterate sonofabitch. Step up your vocab!

We heard rustles in the crowd. I could hear my name, Terry, Terry, and my heart leapt back to Eton, to when those cruel boyz admonished me with ritual roulette licorice stick whippings for not understanding that a pauper's child could BADSTREET ATLANTA GA!!!!!!!
BADDDEESSSSSSSSSTTTTTTTTTTTTTT street
in the whole US

Amerikkka

I gave you nothing and now I'm working
Savannah
jack in 1986 Jack of Spades
Call a spade a spade Daddy would say
FREE RIDES ON MAMA GORDY!!!!

Bundy's fingers sang beyond
the genius of my natural
curl.

The idea of order
in Florida indies; Funk
will put over Funk
or Funk trainees funkyed by Mart

i.
The lonely I.
The Mid-80s were not a great time for me;
'since you ax, fool, mos' daze I cants remembers'
BAM!
BAM!

We worked the collar-and-elbow
like slaves worked fields
like carnies worked rubes
as cards were dealt
in styrofoam temples of Superfund
Gods.

And Bundy and I,
we were neither Gods
nor angels.
We were time-killers, bridge
foursome fillers. Never Fritz's
fair-haired candyassed scions.

We
 were
 marking
TIME
being played for marks
by the marks
who thought we 'owed'
them more
than a side headlock.
A Classic WEARDOWN move.

We held each other in the collar-and-elbow
flesh of faces pressed together
finally, not fearing tomorrow.

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XPW "GO FUNK YOURSELF" COMM TAPE (7/21/00, LA Sports Arena)
(Pogo Pete Stein)

I have taken the plunge and will now review the first XPW tape in DVDVR history. Pray for my soul.

Show starts with Josh Lazie bringing Sabu into the ring to put some spin on the XPW boys getting manhandled by Sal E and Roadkill the previous weekend at the ECW PPV... this leads directly to EVIL COMMISSIONER Rob Zombie^H^H^H^H^H^Black hitting the ring. Black chews the scenery for a couple of minutes ("Internet marks" this, "fuck Heyman" that...) and sends his army of ECW retreads (Look! John Kronus!) to attack Sabu. Tool makes the save for Sabu and Lazio, which leads to Terry Funk hitting the ring to CUT A PROMO on Sabu for their match later. Right away it should be noted that even XPW's vaunted production values don't mean jack when they have to keep the entire arena dark to disguise the fact that there's maybe 2000 fans in a 15,000 seat building.

POGO THE CLOWN vs. NOSAWA:

You haven't lived until you've seen little kids try to shake hands with a wrestler whose gimmick is John Wayne Gacy's alter ego. (True story: Gacy did some contracting work for my grandmother's drugstore across from Cabrini Green, and wouldn't you know it? A couple of young boys who were working there wound up dead in his basement. "WHO KNEW?") NOSAWA controls the first couple of minutes with some dropkicks and a hot Shiryu dive to the floor, but Pogo cuts him off with a HYOOGE short-arm lariat. Squash-a-rama ensues, ending when Pogo hits a fireman's carry into a sort of sit-down gutbuster for the pin. Mitsunobu Kikuzawa runs in at the end to help out his buddy from Tokyo Gurentai, but Pogo puts the stop to that with a double-flapjack. OK opener thanks to NOSAWA working for four... thankfully Pogo's shitty enough that I don't feel badly for him being stuck in this gimmick, sorta like Wifebeater.

HANDICAP MATCH: WESTSIDE NIGGAZ vs MEXICO'S MOST WANTED (REY MISTERIO, HALLOWEEN & DAMIAN 666 w/LADY VICTORIA):

The lack of a working microphone in-ring kills off the stickwork until Carlito Montana can hit the ring and tell the world that "I hate niggers, but I REALLY hate wetbacks." And so naturally, Westside has no problems with taking him on as a TAG PARTNER for the match. "It all starts with logic." Match proper is OK until the plunder portion starts, as Chronic is the best New Jack ever and Bigg Rott stays out of the ring for the most part. Then IT'S BREAKIN' DOWN IN LA as Rey puts some staples in Carlito's forehead, Rott KILLS Lady Victoria DEAD with a second-rope K-Driller through a table, Chronic tosses Halloween into the stands, yadda yadda yadda. Finisher has Westside hit Halloween with their version of the Hart Attack (ending in a spin kick instead of the clothesline- neato); the ref inexplicably fast-counts Halloween for this and gets Los Staples en La Cabeza from Rey for his troubles while they get a priest to administer last rites on Victoria. As previously mentioned, match was fine until they got bogged down with the garbage spots. This will become the theme of the night.

I QUIT MATCH: STEVE RIZZONO vs. KID KAOS:

Rizzono comes to the ring wearing an NWO Wolfpack tank-top... I'd suggest calling the WCW Legal department but you'd probably be getting nothing but busy signals. This is easily the best match so far as Kaos seems like a good worker, pulling off some good matwork as well as a sort of moonsault-into-Buff Blockbuster. They throw in a garbage spot near the beginning as Rizzono sets up two chairs and tries to superplex Kaos into them, only for Kaos to flip over and powerbomb him through them. It's actually a very smart spot in that Kaos immediately goes for submissions on Rizzono's back. The match is progressing nicely as Rizzono wins a dueling chair spot with Kaos and goes for a Dragon Sleeper... then someone under the ring (who Rizzono had been conversing with pre-match) "gives up" and the ref thinks Kaos said it. Kaos pulls the guy from under the ring and... "This match MUST continue!" Rizzono borrows Rob Black's cane and pulls a sword from it, but Kaos steals it from him and juices him with it until Rizzono gives up for the win. The announcing here has to be heard to be truly appreciated as Kris Kloss actually starts SCREAMING that the sword is "going right into Rizzono's brain!" Steve Corino juices worse than this getting hit with plastic bottles, but whatever floats their boat. Black challenges Kaos to a "Loser Leaves XPW" match against TracySmothers later on the show... would that qualify as a mercy killing? This was Perfectly Acceptable Wrestling up until the SE portion.

"WHITE TRASH" JOHNNY WEBB (w/JESSICA DARLIN') vs. HOMELESS JIMMY

Webb hits the ring in a Hawaiian shirt and does his best impression of a Southern Pines gas station attendant in explaining to the crowd that Jimmy's "been in an accident" (apparently having been run over by Webb in a televised angle) and can't work the match, so therefore Webb's going on vacation early. John Kronus hits the ring to start the match, which reveals Webb to be this bizarre mutation of Balls Mahoney and RVD... OK worker,fruity embellishments, crappy wardrobe. Webb gets to show his stuff for all of about 45 seconds before Jimmy shows up with a shopping cart full o' plunder and the garbagy goodness commences. Jimmy quickly establishes himself as quite the fearless maniac, hitting a sweet plancha onto Kronus and Webb and toasting himself on the guardrail in the process. Webb and Jimmy soon take out Kronus,

apparently eliminating him off-screen while two of Jimmy's fellow bums set up a table in-ring. Jimmy tosses Webb onto the table and heads up top; Webb catches him and hits what was apparently going to be a Spider German through the table, however Jimmy never touches the table and lands HEAD-FIRST on the mat. Owie owie fuckin' owie. Webb replaces Jimmy on the table and splashes him through it for the merciful pin. This was right in the middle of all garbage matches... I wouldn't mind seeing more of Webb (and even more of Jessica), as he seems to be an OK worker and the gimmick's good for some laughs. Webb also gets points from me for protecting his tender forehead and not blading here.

KOTDM: SUPREME (C) (w/KRISTI MIST) vs. MESSIAH (w/LIZZIE BORDEN):

Oh man, the KOTDM title turns out to be a giant BOWLING TROPHY. Where's Earl "The Pearl" Anthony when you need him? There's a ton of gimmicks laid out here: Barbed-wire on two sides of ropes, beds of nails in each corner, and three sides of the floor are decked out with plates filled with light bulbs, thumbtacks and the Caribbean spidernet deal from FMW. It's actually set up very well and Supreme and Messiah do a good job of teasing spots into the plunder until Supreme pulls Messiah to the floor, and we get our first true idiot bump as Supreme gives Messiah a Rydeen Bomb FACE-FIRST into the thumbtacks. Good lord. Supreme follows with suplexing Messiah onto the light bulbs and now Messiah's hands and arms are so much chum. Back into the ring they set up a spot with Messiah giving Supreme a sleeper while standing on the thumbtacks, then doing the Edge move where he drops Supreme back-first onto the tacks. This of course means that Messiah takes the same bump face-first onto the tacks, so he's already trumped his own idiot bump from before. Meanwhile Supreme comes up with the back of his head covered with the tacks. Messiah then pulls the barbed-wire board into the ring, drapes it atop Supreme and hits an Asai moonsault (spiffy!), but the ref can't make the count in time because now HE has thumbtacks in his hand from hitting the mat. Messiah tries to whip Supreme to the bed of nails but Supreme reverses it and Messiah takes the bump, only to move out of the way so Supreme charges right into it. Larry Rivera with the line of the year: "Why do we have to watch thees violent crap?" ROTFLMAO! Messiah sets up another barbed-wire board on the timekeeper's table and heads in-ring to collect Supreme, but Supreme catches Messiah off guard and gives him a Blockbuster suplex into the thumbtacks. Rivera meanwhile asks rhetorically if Lou Thesz or Jack Brisco would ever stoop to a match like this, and the commentary keeps getting better and better. Supreme follows with a legdrop on Messiah who comes up literally spurting blood out of his head (.7 Honma); Supreme then gives him an Oklahoma Stampede onto the nails and the thumb-tacks in succession. Supreme heads up top; Messiah meets him there and tries something, but Supreme reverses it and gives Messiah a superplex TO THE FLOOR and onto the gimmicked table. At this point Kristi and Lizzie decide to ruin a perfectly good deathmatch with a catfight, soon joined by Rob Black and his large black companion Crack, and they provide a diversion while Messiah "forces" the ref to help him set the thumbtack tray up on two chairs. Kristi hits a chairshot on Messiah who no-sells it, but even the Son of God is forced to sell being bitten DOWN THERE by Kristi. Supreme grabs Messiah, hits a huge powerbomb onto the tacks and gets the pin from the ref (who looks like he took a tack in the face legit on the finish). The Black Army runs in for a beatdown on Supreme, and you note that the Caribbean Spidernet (with flourescent lightbulbs instead of glass) hasn't come into play yet. The reason for this is soon made clear as the Army

quickly put Supreme through it and toss some chairs on him for good measure. This was one heck of a death match, as they both seem to be good at the style and SWEET BABY JESUS did they just kill themselves the whole way. It would've been even better in an actual lit arena where you could see everything, but I could see them working the same kind of match in a building like Korakuen Hall where everything is lit properly and a crowd like they had here would be in close and probably loud as hell for everything. Good stuff.

LOSER LEAVES XPW: KID KAOS vs. TRACY SMOTHERS:

I'm guessing Tracy must've been thrilled with seeing the ref (PEEEEEEEEE WEEEEEEEEEE MOOOOOOOOOORE) still sweeping the remains of the previous match out of the ring. Match proper is pretty much a disappointment as Kaos is in his second match of the night while Tracy probably has no interest whatsoever in taking any more bumps on that mess of a mat than he absolutely has to, based on his sliding into the ring and sweeping away the debris himself. Finish has Kaos hit two of his moonsault- DDT thingies on Tracy for the pin, and Tracy does the Southern-as-collard-greens tease of a breakup with Black before they kiss and make up. I'd bring up the absurdity of Trace celebrating after losing a "loser-leaves-promotion" match... then again, consider the promotion.

XPW TITLE MATCH: SABU (C) (w/JOSH LAZIE) vs. TERRY FUNK (w/ROB BLACK):

These two stay in the ring for all of like 20 seconds before deciding that it isn't worth sticking around in there and take it to the floor. Sabu toasts Terry on a table, at which point they head back into the ring. Funk deposits Sabu on the top rope and sets up a chair in the ring, heads up top and gives Sabu a piledriver onto the outer boroughs of Chair County. You crazy old man, you. Sabu meanwhile sells the random thumbtack in his hand worse than the actual move, then tosses Funk to the floor and hits his trademark Blown Triple-Jump Arabian Thingy. They proceed to brawl to the back and onto the announcer's booth, none of which we can see since they keep the arena spotlights off I guess to maintain the illusion of THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF GREAT XPW FANS HERE IN THE LA SPORTS ARENA. Things do stay lit long enough to see Funk and Sabu literally destroy the two giant Xs that support the entrance to the arena (Sabu apparently still selling the tack in his hand). They meander back to the ring and pretty much go to the finish, which has Funk try to blow a fireball on Sabu only for Lazie to blow fire on *him* first- Sabu then torches Funk himself and gets the pin. Really, really... ungood. The condition of the ring probably had a lot to do with it, but the stuff outside the ring sucked a dick just as badly.

Overall, not nearly as gut-wrenchingly horrible as one might expect. The KOTDM match was very good for the style and definitely should've been the main event if for no other reason than to avoid how badly the quality of the last two matches was hampered by the debris. You probably want this just for that match, but there's enough talent in the group to keep things from getting too shitty on the undercard... they just have to limit the garbage for that to happen (fat chance, I know, but what the hell).

RASMUSSEN'S ONES TO WATCH IN 2K+1...

NOZAWA: Is a superstreaking young luchadore who was thoroughly unimpressive as Super Cocoa but who has hit his stride the last couple of months- as I think he is inspired by tagging with Kikuzawa. Looks like a lost member of TORYMON at this point. Hopefully he will be stateside more often and more importantly- on tapes that I get.

FM-TARO: Has actually been wrestling for five years, but he has been invisible on the tape from Japan front until the last year. Very graceful high-flyer who has a fabulously goofy, thoroughly indie look to him that one must love. Likable offense and beautiful high-flying.

YOSHIDA: Zipang high-flyer who will hopefully upgrade his Yuji Yasaraoka wannabe wardrobe and learn how to work a match in the next year because landing wrong on your neck as you fly over the top rope will only get you so far these days. But I see the spark of a good little worker here.

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Clash of the Champions 19 (6/16/92)
(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

This tournament was an example of the really great parts of Bill Watts' reign. He was a mark for hard ass quality workers like Williams, Gordy, Anderson, Windham and the Steiners and wasn't afraid to have them wrestle for a million years. This tourney also didn't have the sucky parts of WCWatts as the NWA status killed the insipid top rope rule, and this particular Clash had juniors galore- with Beniot, Liger, Pillman, the Malenkos and Silver King and El Texano all making appearances. Hell! Larry O'Day was a junior too.

Joe & Dean Malenko vs. Ricky Steamboat/Nikita Koloff

The enormous collective DVDVR Playaz fanboyism of Joe Malenko has been well documented; I think this is Joe's only big two match ever and he rules it as usual. The Malenkos are comically announced as being from Hungary, while Nikita is equally comically announced as being from Lithuania. Ricky and Joe start out and TAKE IT TO THE MAT, with a series of go behinds and takedowns and a knuckle lock, which Joe does a monkey flip roll over from. Dean tags in and Steamboat does some of his world famous deep arm drags. At this point Joe is the clearly superior worker of the brothers and his stuff with Steamboat is the class of this match.

Thankfully, Nikita is kept on the apron for the lion's share of this, although if you forgive the Nikita sell of a Dean suplex, he doesn't fuck anything up when he is in. Dean is the Jeff of the team and he takes a big ass bump through the ropes as Nikita presses out of a pin. The Malenkos get some near falls on Steamboat with some double teams including a clothesline/back suplex combo, Nikita gets the hot tag, hits some of his crappy lariets and gets the pin. Fun match with the Malenko v. Steamboats being boss as shit.

Z-Man/Marcus Alexander Bagwell vs. Stunning Steve Austin/Ric Rude

Kind of creepy as you think that out of the four guys in this match, one is out of the business, two have broken their necks and one is dead, it is kind of like that queasy feeling you get

watching World Class. Shockingly, Jim Ross does not mention Bagwell's Spraybury High athletic background like he did in ever other pre-American Males MAB match. It is really weird to see Steve Austin with pretty blond hair and no huge gut, he throws stomps and punches the same as he did back then, but a lot of the other stuff he did is completely different- like a bunch of suplexes appear and his movement is different: ways very hard to describe but very noticeable if you're looking at it. Rude was at his high point as a worker- right before he got hurt and looking really great here with really crisp work. He had the coolest jumping piledriver ever, and I really dug the full leg extension he used on his kneelifts too. You tend to think of these things when you watch a long squash match like this. I think Z-Man and Marcus Alexander Bagwell shall now be known collectively as GAY PORN~! because they look exactly like gay porn stars. Not that I have watched a lot of gay porn or anything... really I have just seen documentaries and such on the porn industry which will deal with the gay side of the biz, that is how I know that Zenk and Bagwell would fit in. No. I really like girls, just ask your mother! She'll tell you, yeah I fucked your mother what you do you have to say to that HUH PUNK YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME, I'LL KICK YOUR ASS!

Terry Gordy/Steve Williams vs. Larry & Jeff O'Day

This match is why I loved this tourney, Watts actually flew in these two shmoees from Australia to get slaughtered by Gordy and Williams in three minutes. Jeff O'Day is apparently a multi time Australian champion and Larry is his flabby son. The sun is always shining in Australia so I have no idea why these two are so pasty. Williams and Gordy pummel Jeff- including Gordy giving him a hideous backdrop driver (you can actually read his lips, and he says "my neck") and no-selling everything he tried. This got the MVC over as killers, although I would have liked to see if Australian wrestling is stylistically different. Larry, who is Jeff's son, wasn't in the match at all, he was something like 19 in 1991 so I wonder if he is still working Australian indies. I want Larry + Jeff v. Public Enemy on the next iGeneration PPV.

Barry Windham/Dustin Rhodes vs. Arn Anderson/Bobby Eaton

This was old school NWA tag match cucumber in the stylistic tossed salad of this tourney. Anderson and Eaton never seemed to gel as a team, although they looked great here. Basic NWA tag wrestling, hot tag et all match. Arn and Barry were bumping like freaks for the Texans including Barry dropkicking Arn off the top rope, plus a neat spot where Dustin bionic elbows Bobby Eaton who bounces off the second rope into an elbow, back into the rope, back into an elbow, and the Dustin does a Kawadaish running big boot (which Eaton leans into like a champ) dumping Bobby to the floor. It seems like the wrong fat Cowboy is booking this match because Dustin comes out looking like a champ. He is face in peril but never actually makes the tag, kicking out of a top rope kneedrop, an Eaton bulldog and even the Arn spinebuster (although a distracted ref at least gives him some extra time to recover) then he gets the clean pin on Arn with his own bulldog. Despite the worst worker in the match getting the most props (although Dustin does look really good here and was really good at point directly compared to these other three) this was one heck of a match. Arn, Bobby, and Barry Windham are masters of 80's style NWA wrestling and this had that kind of crisp, credible work in spades. Very different from the weird hybrid style of Steiners v. MVC or the hyped up NJ Juniors spotastic match that Liger/Pillman and Beniot/Wellington deliver, but a super match nonetheless.

Silver Kings vs. Freebirds

On the surface this looks like one of the super weird matches we always like to have threads about on the DVDVR message board, like Psicosis + Col DeBeers + Ryuma Go v. Rey Mysterio Jr. + Billy Jack Haynes + Bryan Cox or OZ + Hiro Saito v. Jushin Liger + Shinya Hashimoto. While it is true that there are few wrestler less qualified to wrestle a Lucha Libre match than the fat and washed up Micheal Hayes and Jimmy Garvin, the El Texano and Silver King were undaunted. They just worked the match like the were back in Mexico wrestling fat useless luchadores like Drakula or Killer. They just told Purely Sexy and Gorgeous to stand there and they were going to do some stuff around them. Silver King, who at this point was probably one of the top ten workers in the world, looks incredible in this- doing an awesome delayed Eddie Guerrero styled senton, and a huge missile dropkick. He also does an enormous plancha to the floor (which Texano has to catch, because lords knows you wouldn't want Jimmy Garvin to catch you). The Kings almost make this match good however the vortex of suck that is Micheal Hayes brings even the awesome Cowboys back to earth. He blows a drop down and then whiffs on his punch- two things a first day Tough Enough contestant could pull off. Then after the plancha he wins with a small package and the Freebirds go to the Clash to stink up a Hase + Hash match. Even with the Southern as hell Birds this was a lucha match all the way, I could just see this being FF material on a UWA tape.

Jushin Liger/Brian Pillman vs. Chris Benoit/Beef Wellington

Awesome spotfest which was totally New Japan Junior style tag sprint. Benoit and Liger hit a lot of their typical spots from that period, Pillman fit in perfectly and Beef Wellington bumps like a Poutine And Back Bacon Pirata Morgan. The best parts of this match were Brian Pillman and Beniot beating the hell out of each other, and you see what a great feud these two could have had- really one of the lost feuds on the 1990's. They just chop the shit out of each other on the floor and Pillman absolutely kills Benoit with a second rope dangerous backdrop which dumps him right on his neck. Liger busts out the Plancha and an Asai Moonsault (which the Governor calls the most breathtaking move he has ever seen in 20 years of watching wrestling, that is how you put over the juniors.) Jim Ross and Ventura mention that the mats on the floor are gone two dozen times. The crowd goes absolutely batshit over this match, and any idiot could see that a hot juniors division would get over. So instead of signing the Silver Kings and the Malenko plus the four guys in this match, the Cowboy kills the belt because people want to see big guys.

Headhunters vs. Akira Nogami/Hiroshi Hase

I would assume they were going to bring in the actual Headhunters but there must have been visa problems because, these Headhunters were Arn Anderson and Bob Cook under goofy black and white masks. This was basically a squash match and it was decent when Arn was in and horrible when Cook was in (don't let nostalgia cloud your thinking, Cook SUCKED.) I think this is Nagami's only U.S. match and it is shame that it was wasted on this thing)and everything else he ever was in ever. Here is your forgotten worker of the 1990s.) I don't know why they couldn't have the Suckbirds beat the Head Hunters and give us Nogami + Hase v. Silver Kings, golly that would have ruled. This sucked.

Terry Gordy/Steve Williams vs. Steiner Brothers

We saw a bunch of different styles of wrestling on this show, Lucha, New Japan Junior tag match, Old School NWA style, but this was something completely different. It was sort of a Strong Style tag match, but I think it was sort of a proto-U.S. BattlArts. BattlArts is a pro-style wrestling promotion, which uses shootfighting and martial arts as a base, while this match used Amature wrestling as a build for the rest of the match. Scott and Williams do a Greco Roman section, Gordy and Rick take it to the mat, and then Rick and Williams do one of the coolest sequences I have ever seen. Willams does a single leg trip and takes Rick down. Rick does an escape and gets the ride, then he lays is some nasty crossfaces just smacking Williams, Doc rolls out and gets to his feet and forces him to the corner and just slaps the shit out of Rick. Rick does a awesome double leg take down and starts laying in punches in the mount, Doc then does the awesome scissors leg amateur reversal to get on top it was the coolest reversal I think I have seen. Then Doc wastes Rick with a clothesline. Just amazing stuff. They went into bunch of big suplexes before Gordy and Williams start working on Scotty's knee. The match ends with Williams hitting a very cool press powerslam for a near fall. Then Scotty gets clipped by Gordy for the pin. Just super neat match, that doesn't really have any precedent or antecedent. I don't think this match could have had a larger effect on the style of US wrestling though, simply because these were probably the only four guys in the states at that time who could pull off a match like this- and Gordy and Doc weren't gonna be gone from Japan for too long. On a similar note, I would have liked Kurt Angle to incorporate these stylistic pointers into his offense- as opposed to just being a slightly taller, funnier, kinda better version of Disco Inferno.

At this point, WCW had a hell of a set-up: hot babyface who could work in Sting, the greatest Monster heel ever in Vader, great over heel stable in the Dangerous Alliance, and good workers as undeneath babyfaces in Steamboat, Rhodes and Windham. Plus the Steiners and MVC, and all these great juniors available. Of course, Watts killed the junior division, pushed Simmons in number #456 failed attempt at recreating the Junkyard Dog, and pushed his green untalented son to the moon and all of the sudden you have ppvs headlined by Jake the Snake Roberts vs Sting and the Barbarian vs Ron Simmons. Jesus Christ, do you remember THAT? Remember when he brought over NINETEEN NINETY-TWO MASA CHONO AND NINETEEN NINETY-TWO MUTA and told them "not to show up his boys"- thus leading to the worst match of their pre-surgeries careers? (Because if you ASK Muta to half-ass it, God help you). Anyway, WCW was really great there for a minute though, and this show and Beach Blast are super examples.

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Ray Duffy's Ones to Watch for in the Y2k+1

Low-Ki

Low-Ki is a north eastern indy guy who's my pick of a one to watch as a break out guy in 2001. I first saw Low-Ki back in 1999 when he had been wrestling all of about 8 to 10 months. He was

very much a guy who had some spectacular spots (such as a phoenix splash and a handspring into an overhead kick that was extremely graceful) that you had to see before he killed himself. I had the privilege of seeing him work against Mike Quackenbush and Mariachi Loco in April and he has already started to develop some mat skills. The fact that he's been doing shots for ECWA also helps his cause as it's one of the better indys around and opens up the possibility of working the Super 8 this year, plus he gets to work against the likes of Scott Andrews and Reckless Youth. Hopefully, he will be the next big thing from the indies in 2001.

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Cactus Jack/Maxx Payne vs. The Nasty Boys - WCW Spring Stampede '94 (4/17/94)

Cactus Jack/Kevin Sullivan vs. The Nasty Boys - WCW Slamboree '94 (5/22/94)

(PHIL RIPPA)

Okay, well both of these need to get reviewed and the easiest way to compare the two of the two determine which one is better and if either of them deserve to be considered one of the Best Matches of the 90s. Plus, I get to get all goofy with the reviewing and then things will get all sorts of confusing and I will make some jokes and take pot shots at the residents of Philadelphia. We'll laugh. We'll cry. I'll think it is better than Cats. Well, let's break this down and see what we got. (Now, if Dean or I wanted to be really ambitious we would get all funky with the tables and format this all nicely, maybe even have the disembodied, floating head of Foley or someone to be placed which ever side had the advantage.)

Maxx Payne vs. Kevin Sullivan

The most obvious difference in these matches is the difference between Payne and Sullivan. Neither is a spectacularly good wrestler. Sullivan was getting up in the years and Payne was a big blob with the hair. Nevertheless, he could still do more than Sullivan. He was more mobile and was willing to sell - something that is very important in a brawl. Sullivan would get hit in the head with any number of things and won't sell a blessed thing. Hell, he did this in all his matches. Go back and watch the Falls Count Anywhere matches with Chris Benoit. It seemed that the older Sullivan got, the less he sold. Payne didn't do anything great but he did make me want to urp on my shoes.

Advantage - Jack/Payne vs. Nasties

Cactus Jack vs. Cactus Jack

Jack's performance in both matches is admirable, as he has to do the lion's share of the work. Having built his rep on insane brawling and bumping, these were his matches. Jack was also working both matches hurt and he was somewhat uninspired as he was getting pissed at WCW. In fact he wasn't even supposed to be in the second match but Dave Sullivan's injury changed all that. He doesn't need to do anything really crazy in the second match, as there is a lot more organized chaos. There wasn't "Hey, I have an idea. Let me wail on you with this shovel." He takes two horrific looking bumps in the first match (the shovel shot is still one of the most brutal things I have seen). Those two bumps (the Nestea Plunge off the ramp to the concrete), while incredibly stupid, were awesome to look at and made the match memorable. They also worked

in the context that this was a Falls Count Anywhere match, so the viewer would expect that it would take something special to get the victory. The second match had Dave Schultz - and more on him later.

Advantage - Jack/Payne vs. Nasties

The Nasty Boys vs. The Nasty Boys

I could just dismiss this because the Nasties for the most part are terrible. But this match is geared to their strength - which is not having to wrestle. Both have the cardiovascular training of Mark Schrader so that hurts both matches as they go on. This is also a reason why both were somewhat on the short side (the first match went just under nine minutes while the second was just under 10). The Nasties were sloppy as all get out - remember Foley even comments on this in his book. He said one of the reasons things were so brutal and violent was because the Nasties were so incompetent. Foley ending up wrestling 10 times harder than he planned on just so he didn't get killed. On an unrelated note, I forgot about the Knobbs mullet which was really out there back in the day.

Advantage - Push

The Referees

The thing that jumped out at me the most when I rewatched these matches was the comparison of the refs. Okay, I truly hate the whole Dave Schultz appearance. Jesus - the only reason Schultz was there was for the cheap Philly pop, which wasn't all that great. Stupid Philly fans. Why don't you pull your fingers out of your ass and nose, respectively, go back to booing Santa, no-selling chokeslams for 911 and leave the wrestling watching to us. I mean Schultz looks like the only reason he is there is because the only other option he had for money was being the squeegee guy at Scores. Okay, I won't retread the same ground I have before (which is that Schultz wanders around with a deer in the headlights look instead of actually doing any officiating) so I will point out the very big difference between the refs in the two matches. The first match uses TWO refs. It is so simple it is brilliant. These are tag team Falls Count Anywhere matches. So if you have two sets of guys fighting, inevitably they are going to separate. When they do - how is one ref supposed to count pinfalls if he is over on the other side of the arena? Two refs solves that problem nicely. Schultz was the only person working his match, which is even worse when you consider that he is a special guest ref who isn't used to doing this job. The argument has been made that if there are no pinfalls to count then why does it matter if the ref is there to count it. If there are no pinfalls to count, then that is the fault of the workers. They need to realize that, again, the point of a Falls Count Anywhere match is that previous history has dictated that a ring can't contain the wrestlers and that to get a decisive winner you need to just let them go to. So by not having any pinfall attempts the viewing audience believes knows that the finish will occur in the ring. That makes the rest of the match pointless and kills the psychology. If you are going to not have any pinfalls then just do a No-DQ match and forget ruining the story telling aspect of the match.

Advantage - Jack/Payne vs. Nasties

The Finishes

Match 1 - Broken table, back splash of rampway, wicked shovel shot for a pin. Match 2 - Schultz throws crappy punches, one hockey stick shot and the titles change hands. So my question remains this - so only the brutality and punishment that Sags (who was the one pinned) took during the match was less than some punches from a has-been hockey player and a hockey stick. I don't think so. And that was another problem with Schultz's appearance (and guest refs in general), they are going to ruin the ending because otherwise they wouldn't be their the first place. I have seen people drop five snowflakes on this match which is loony - the ending itself proves me point. If you are going to give star ratings on a five star scale, that would imply that the match is perfect. Well how can a match be perfect when the ending is an ex-hockey player roughing up one of the combatants and then fast counting the pinfall?

Advantage - Jack/Payne vs. Nasties

Intangibles (or other things Phil wanted to spout off about)

The hip thing to say is to look smart by saying "Well, you know that match was a homage to the Tupelo Concession Stand Brawl." Oh, shut the fuck up. Just because some T-shirts got soiled doesn't mean dick. Everything in wrestling is build off of the matches of the past. That is why it is so cool to go back on watch the older things because you can see what the newer stuff has built off of. It can be a homage if it a one shot deal but do you know how over played the concession brawl is? I mean, hell, WCW was already revisiting that idea in the Second Match and ECW was starting to build its fanbase with similar type matches. And just because a match is similar doesn't mean it is a tribute to anything. You aren't going to sit there and say "You know that Benoit/Sullivan match was a homage to that Jack/Hammer match." Back to the matches at hand, both matches are fun to watch. The second one just has WAY too many glaring flaws to consider it better than the first. The argument that "it was more of a wrestling match" is ludicrous because these weren't supposed to be wrestling matches. They are Falls Count Anywhere matches - these types of matches aren't booked so Foley can work out of the knucklelock. Everyone knew going in that the second match was going to be an all-out brawl. You had added Sullivan to the mix and they had the history of the first match to work with. Out of the two matches, the one with Payne is much better in that it was first, it had better spots, had better psychology and Payne is a better worker than Sullivan (though that is like saying that your 2 inch cock is superior to someone's 1 inch cock). I believe that people overrate the second match because Foley, in passing, mentions that he might have liked the second match more. I really think that neither one deserves to be in the Top 200 though. Time constraints and too many lull periods as walking replaces actual action go along with some of the other flaws already mentioned.

~!~

PHIL SCHNEIDER'S ONES TO WATCH IN 2K+1

Jardi Franz

The first time I saw Jardi Franz he was quite the weak ass spotblowing highflyer stinking it up on both coasts on handhelds at cheap indie shows, but luckily- in the last year- he has improved tenfold. He actually has a wrestling base now and stole all of Jody Fliesh's highspots (run up the wall, springboard shooting star press) and can actually wrestle a match unlike Flash. He has

had a couple of great tag matches with his brother and some very good singles matches against Donovan Morgan and Vinny Massaro- with the pinnacle being a REALLY great match tagging Vinnie Masaro against the West-Side Playas (which was actually BETTER than Modeat/Daniels vs WSP2K), if he keeps improving he should land a job somewhere or at least a sizable indie cult following.

Noayuki Taira

Is part of the influx of new talent into everyone's favorite Japanese Indie- the fabulous BattlARTS. A former legit big deal in K-1 before jumping to the hard-ass pro style of BattlARTS, he is already bringing kicks that look like they REALLY hurt- but brings the added element of all these Bruce Lee Fancy Dancy stuff, odd nifty matwork- so weird that it's not like Carl Malenko and it's not Dr Cerebro, but veering dangerously close to the land of Johnny Saint. His matches are already pretty good out of the shoot, eventhough he is basically a rookie. He's already better than Nagai all-around and is solid number two to Murakami to the Troika of New BattlARTS rising stars.

Bomber Infernale

In 1999, IWRG lucha tapes were like the WWO tapes of the end of the millenium- the lucha tape you would throw in after all the AAA and EMLL and the WPW were already watched. You kinda scanned the tapes looking for a young Shiima Mobunaga and the odd Dr CErebro match. One of the guys we wold all fast forward past is a fat, tubby, Brazo de Oro lookalike called Bomber Infernale. Fast Forward to Y2K and IWRG is suddenly LUCHA CRACK- you'll sell your momma's TV to get it and Mr Bomber Infernale is the biggest bumpfreak to ever throw on some knockoff Satanico tights. And now instead of shuttering when we see his name, we have the contented look of the lucha fan waiting to see what part of his back he is gonna fry on the concrete floor after getting hurled over the toprope. Welcome the New Millenium Jerry Estrada! He's got a future if he's got a future.

~!~

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ CWA BODYGUARDS AND BANDITS (1/5/96)

DEAN RASMUSSEN

Well FUCK ME RUNNIN! SHIT FIRE AND SAVE THE MATCHES! Lookit what IIIII finally got (God bless (or damn I guess) Joe Kazmer~!)! I've been looking for this for a while since a.) Rippa and Schneider said it was soooo hideous and b.) it was so hideous that Tim Noel taped over his version years ago. If that's not enough to make you WANT IT like you WANT Hulk Hogan not seeing any Hulkamaniacs in that castle after Kevin Sullivan ran through the woods in his underwear to get his father, King Curtis. These kinds of things have horrible, carbunkly VALUE. Five years from now, IMAGINE how much my permanent tape will be worth- the one containing the Ultimate Warrior forcing the wax dummy of the Disciple to suck his messianic penis in the rafters of Nitro! And the mirror thing with Hogan and Warrior! I'm stoked about buying numerous cadillacs and fine cigars with the windfall! Anyway... I got this and it is time to

WATCH this God-forsaken thing. I have waited a while for this and it better deliver the goods. Or badz, I guess.... BRING IT!

Ray Boom-Boom Mancini is our host and he is reading a history of Alcatraz. Suddenly he starts explaining the Football Rules of the match and this is becoming everything I ever wanted. Upon reflection, they claimed it was at Alcatraz in the opening promo and then they ramble at length about how it is Friday at the Sportatorium.

Everyone CUTZ A PROMO~! EWWWWWWWWW!

YOUR LINE-UP:

Guido Falcone: Put a grade 6 mullet on Barry Darsow and VOILA!~

Dom Minoldi: He's the guy who owns the Bodyguard service that sponsors this PPV if I remember the folklore of this unloved ppv deal- and he babbles on and on and on about "settluling" it in the ring. His heaping handfuls of fat seem to suggest that he could take nine or ten bullets for a client before any bullet would hit any of the "vitals"- as they say in the biz. Godspeed, our sweet Dom! Wrestle like the wind!

John Hawk: Boom-Boom is feeling the effects of a pugilistic career as he veers off to the Land of Punchdrunkia and tries to discuss the "larry-aught" and the uses of the future Bradshaw's bullrope.

Bo Vegas and Devon Michaels: This is an AMAZING pair of Canadian Passports sitting on the scalps of two second tier MX lite- AWASH in gold lame, and confessing their deep fear of- yes- Skan-dahr AGK-bahr! Oh fuck me runnin...

Mark Valiant: He is happy about having Scott Putski in his corner. Yes he is.

Scott Putski: Here he looks like Mini Jack Haynes as opposed to Lugercito. He says "Polish Power RUNNING WILD" three times, working the catchphrases like a wrestling VISIONARY!

Rod Price: He's gonna ugly up all the pretty boys. I dunno. Bo Vegas has an impenetrable kevlar coating of mousse accentuating a mullet so powerful that it's quasar-level density doesn't allow light to escape.

Firebreaker Chip: He says that he is "Twisted Steel and Sex Appeal" but never claims to be "every man's nightmare, every schoolgirl's dream" so I guess Jim Cornette never sued CWA for trademark infringement and thus forfeiting the giant gate of this event. He warns the good guys that they better have their jockstraps on because it's gonna be WAR! Naked Jockstrap WaR!!! AH Texas.....

After the promos have given us a feel for what maDCAP MAYHEM is to come, they give us the full line-up.....

BO VEGAS/ DEVON MICHEALS/ MARC VALIANT/ SCOTT PUTSKI/ STEVE COX/ DOM MINOLDI (coached by Ivan Putski) vs. FIRECHIPPER BREAK!/ ROD PRICE/ JOHN HAWK/ SHAWN SUMMERS/ ALEX PORTEAU/ GUIDO FALCONE (coached by world's shittiest manager from my childhood- Skandor Akbar)

The color commentator is the Angel of Death. And one other thing- the color commentator is the ANGEL OF DEATH. The crowd chants U-S-A out of sheer patriotism or Skandor Akbar IS an actual HEAT MAGNET~! I'll have to rethink this. (I WILL WATCH THIS THIS MATCH NOW.) WELL. They did not fudge the clock at all. They went a legit hour. Actually, they went longer because of overtime and you also had the fabulous VIDEO at halftime! It's funky fresh and def and shit. "Alcartraaz! Gonna Rock! Alcaatrazzz! Gonna Rock!" Boom Boom Mancini walks around looking in the cells. It's all poignant and shit while Dom Minoldi and Akbar's bodyguard push each other around. Then they interview a guy who served ten years on the Rock- just like a regular football halftime show. That part was kinda interesting and looked like the whole reason Boo Boom Mancini is on this thing.

AS FOR THE ACTUAL WRESTLING MATCH:The wrestling was perfectly fine for the most part and really good when Alex Porteau, Rod Price and even John Hawk and Scott Putski (who brought his working boots- GO FIGURE!) were in. The only ones who openly sucked was the thoroughly shitty trunkload of poop called Dom Minoldi (You could actually train a LITTLE for a fucking PPV there, Dom, or pay someone to play you or just be the coach. Either way, I can see why Hawk, Porteau, and Price start stiffing the fuck out of him as he gets the winning pinfall), Firebreaker Chip (if you ever get stuck with a gimmick as embarrassing and stupid as Firebreaker Chip, you don't KEEP it after you leave the promotion- unless you are an actual fireman. And if are an actual fireman, don't you have something important to do, like not be stinking up perfectly good Rod Price match.) and Steve Cox- who is pretty crappy but is fucking Mitsuhara frickin Misawa compared to our boy Dom and Breakerchipper Chip- though Mitsuhara Misawa's grandmother has better looking punches than Cox. Cox does take fucking MAGNIFICENT Western Lariat by John Hawk like a man- so that helps his cause. Devon Micheals was really good in a Southern tagteam way and I had never seen him before. His partner- Bo Vegas- didn't do enough for me to gauge his worth- though he hit a really shitty clothelines but also some monkey flips, so maybe he is a poorman's Bobby Fulton. I can't be sure. Shawn Summers and Guido Falcone round out the cast- as I'm guessing they are crappy workers (as a thoroughly shitty clotheline by Falcome would hint at) who they kept on the apron. Marc Valient seems to be good enough- he hits a really sloppy elbow, a nice Floatover Vertical Suplex, and takes a Southern-style beating like a man. Me and Rippa were trying to figure out why Rod Price was never a millionaire Superstar making guest appearances of Dawson Creek now. He deeply has the goods in the ring and he's big enough to be a Big Two wrestler. Rippa made the idiotic statement that maybe he was on drugs or something and I said, "It's motherfucking professional wrestling. Nobody ever got held down because they are drug addicts." Rippa said, "Maybe he cleaned himself up out of big time wrestling or something." Either way, Rod Price is the best thing on this. My other question is- Why isn't Alex Porteau a star? I remember he was the Pug and wasted by the WWF and then he showed up in WCW and had cool matches on Worldwide and WCWSN and then he disappeared again. And yet Dennis Knight and Mabel stay employed. Speaking of questions- why is Firebreaker Chip so

horrible in this? He is old NWA- eternally jobbing as Curtis Thompson- you'd think he would no how to do a bodyslam without severing their spinal cord. He does hit a nifty Reverse Body Press- so even that criticism is qualified. Overall, the main thing is that this match is not a hideous batch of shit like I'm figuring "Heroes Of Wrestling" is. It goes too long- but you got ten guys so it's not like they shouldn't have been able to go 60 with ease. The work is fine and I think the problem is that all these guys wrestle old Southern style and that style performed this generically isn't enough to keep you engaged for an hour. This is like a midgrade lucha match where it's just endless but not terrible or anything. The rules are stupid and they didn't plan any of the match out so they keep doing the same stuff over and over and it never builds to ANYTHING except the Overtime pin- and that's by the shittiest worker in the building. It was like they didn't want to burn the crowd out ANY during the first sixty minutes- hoping to get this nuclear pop at the final pinfall. I must confess that this nuclear pop never came about. Still the work was solid. Most of these guys acquitted themselves well. The reason this sucks is because it's FUCKING TEXAS WRESTLING. No Coal-miners glove, no penalty box match, no Country Whippin' Match- IT'S THE SPORTATORIUM! WHERE IS LANCE VON ERICH TO TURN THE LIGHTS OUT?!?! And there a whole lot of folks rolling over in their graves. So maybe this is perfectly fine, on second thought.

APPENDIX: As for it being a football match: It was probably the finest football based ever- better than Lex Luger vs the Big Cat (coached by Lawrence Taylor), better than the football matches in the Team Challenge, infinitely better than Jeff Gaylord vs Matt Borne (How was Jeff Gaylord AND JOHN TATUM not in this match?!?!), better than Kevin Greene vs the Giant (of course, Kevin Greene worked circles around the hapless and pathetic Giant, but still...), I say better than Lawrence Taylor vs BamBamn Bigelow (Rippa disagrees), better than Reggie White vs Mongo McMichael, better than the Fridge but not as good as Bob Golic and Too Tall Jones in Wrestlemania 2 (I'm guessing here). If Mongo/ Kevin Greene vs the Horsemen counts, then the Greene match would win.

~!~

POGO PETE's ONES TO WATCH IN 2001 VIC CAPRI

Chicago promoter Sam DeCero probably wouldn't strike most smart fans as a producer of talented wrestlers if one remembers his past history as part of the old Maxx Brothers team in the AWA and various sundry Midwestern indies. And yet somehow, his Windy City Wrestling promotion has managed to produce quite a few quality workers like Chris Daniels, Kevin Quinn, Steve Boz and now Vic Capri. Vic had his coming-out party at 2000 Super 8 with the boss match against Daniels... he's an excellent technical wrestler who uses almost an All-Japan style in terms of suplexes and matwork. I was tempted to say he was too small to really make it big anywhere until I saw his Jakked match against Crash Holly a few weeks ago, where it turned out he's actually bigger than Crash. With that in mind I wouldn't be surprised to see him turn up in a major promotion in the next year or so, or at the very least hook on with a Japanese group.

RED

Quite simply, this kid is going to be a major star if he lives past puberty. Red is an NYC worker who had everyone's jaws at the UCW show dropping with his highspots like the Phoenix Splash, running moonsault to the floor and *standing* SSP. He's also charismatic as hell and just watching him it's easy to see how much he loves performing in front of a crowd. He's greener than the NOAH ring and has to work on his psychology, but if Low-ki's recent progression has been any indication then there's no reason not to think Red will also tone his act down and focus on becoming more rounded. In the meantime, sit back and prepare to be amazed once the UCW tape comes out...

~!~

"The blue lights bring us closer to God. [Pynchon takes a ride on a freight train to Appalachia and books a "very special" episode of Memphis rasslin, Draft 137,58]"

by Anthony Gancarski
1974.

Memphis.Rufus

R Freight

Train Jones squash

working some doofus

BilJimFlotsamBigJim

Lancaster.

Jammaster? No, probably not.

And Rufus see he jus flew in from Jack Benny's

an Boy Howdy, if his arms aren't tired

hahahahahahahhahahahhahha

LOL

Rufusyouso

Krazee.

And Rufus loved the armbar.

The methodical attack.

His daddy used the armbar.

That was how mama

got knocked up

and delivered Rufus and JYD

and all the other

hambone minstrels

insidious in 70s territorial programming.

Mama got knocked up by an armbar.

Rufus worried that he might knock up

Big Jim

but Big Jim was a boy

just like Rufus.

So he kept using the armbar.
It was a good move.
If he got mad at Big Jim Lancaster
he could give him an

[wait
t
il
for d
e
b
it] a
ng.....

INDIAN BURN~!

LATINO HEAT~!

LEGIT HEAT IN THE BACK~!

Jones maintained the armbar, grittily angling for leverage. On occasion, when Lancaster left just an angel's breath of an opening, Jones would bolster his advantage by laying in a clubbing forearm, a blow stunning in both its simplicity and its impact. The studio audience sat in rapt silence: here were two gladiatorial figures, fighting certainly [albeit on the most superficial of levels] to bolster their position within the promotion and to strengthen their claim for contendership to Jerry Lawler's prized Southern heavyweight strap [though I hasten to add that no one should confuse the Memphis permutation of the title with the Florida derivation of the prize.].

But there was more at stake. Lancaster had established a cocky presence in the area. Even though he routinely came up short in matches with the area's brightest stars, Lancaster still appealed to the common man, that salt of the earth brought down by false populism and saddened by the inability of the guvmint to stop dem damn FREE RIDES ON

the Government dole by avaricious, ecologically-catastrophic corporations.

But even that common man saw a changing of the guard in the midst. As the African-American [indeed some have compared this trailblazing athlete to Jess Owens] Jones pressed his advantage, laying in vicious forearm shots. And the crowd responded in kind, chanting in unison 'You can't fuck my daughter but you can collect my trash but you can't drink outta that there waterfountain heheheh waterfountainsoundslikewatermelon and Mama we're all stereotypes now'.

And as the tv screen faded to blue, then black after Jones' inevitable triumph over the closet racism and the strum and the drang, we are left to wonder why it is that in a world like this one things like this go on, you know what I'm saying, I'm just concerned and for real if she slept around on you I don't know about it.]

~!~

MIKE NAIMARK TALKS ABOUT SHOOTFIGHTING

Shooters to Watch for 2001

Traditionally, when you compile a list of 'fighters to watch' for a new year, the focus is on the young punks, the ultra-talented up-and-comers who can parlay their raw natural abilities into a vehicle for dominance with just a bit of guidance and experience. We can all remember the first time we, as combat sports fans, laid eyes on the can't-miss rookie, the unknown with phenomenal skills; the early memories of Mike Tyson or Vitor Belfort, the vague recollections of Frank Shamrock and Tito Ortiz cutting their teeth against seasoned veterans. The ones to watch should be the ones you haven't paid much attention to already, but this year, the ones I want to watch should be familiar names to most of you. These are the fighters who in many cases have the most to lose in the world of MMA in 2001, but who also have perhaps their last chance to stand atop the combat sport world as champions. And so before I head to my underground bunker in anticipation of a belated millennial apocalypse, I present to you, the distinguished and erudite DVDVR reader, my list of fighter to whom I will be paying close attention to in the upcoming year.

Rickson Gracie

Lets start at the top, shall we? 5 years ago nobody could question Rickson's status in the MMA world with any authority. Royce and Renzo Gracie showed clear dominance across the globe, yet both men would readily admit that their skills paled beside those of their legendary brother Rickson. Rickson, it was rumored, was undefeated in more than 400 fights, and not only surpassed his brothers in technical jiu-jitsu skill, but also had the stand-up striking skills that were so conspicuously absent from Royce & Renzo's arsenals. After winning the Japan Vale Tudo Open tournaments in 1994 and 1995, Rickson boldly claimed that he would fight and defeat three separate UFC champions - Dan Severn, Ken Shamrock, and Oleg Taktarov - in the same night, one after the other, for the sum of one million dollars. No promoter could be found to front that kind of long green, but Rickson's proclamation only served to further his mythical status in the MMA world. Indeed, Rickson's reputation continued to grow, and his legend cast a wider net than ever as the 1990s drew to a close. Rickson himself fought only sporadically, and only in Japan, where the Gracie legend afforded him the biggest paydays for his appearances, despite the questionable quality of his opposition in the PRIDE competitions. Winning easily and proclaiming the continued superiority of Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, it appeared that Rickson's legacy was secured, and that he would be able to slide easily into a retirement of seminars and

teaching as the undisputed greatest fighter of the modern era. But then something funny happened to the Gracie Jiu-Jitsu bandwagon - the wheels began to fall off. First Royce Gracie, after a long hiatus, lost his first competitive match against a mediocre BJJ'er, Wallid Ismail, in humiliating fashion, being choked into unconsciousness. But the worst was yet to come for the Gracie clan, because a young Japanese professional wrestler named Kazushi Sakuraba was about to dispel the Gracie mystique in dynamic fashion. First Royler Gracie fell to Sakuraba in a grueling 30 minute war at PRIDE8 via referee stoppage. Next came the return of Royce Gracie, three-time undefeated UFC champion, in a match that rewrote all the previous standards of excellence and endurance in the world of MMA. When this astounding 90-minute battle of attrition was over, Sakuraba stood victorious when Gracie's family threw in the towel to save their exhausted fighter. And a mere three months later, as if to prove the legitimacy of his record against the Gracie legend, Sakuraba stepped in the ring with Renzo Gracie, perhaps the 'fightingest' of all the Gracies, and after nearly 20 minutes of excellent exchanges, managed to break Renzo's arm and force a stoppage. Three Gracies, three clear-cut wins, a record which might have seemed as impossible as Paul Wight's 'Giantsault' only a few years earlier now belonged to a pro-wrestler who lost his MMA debut to Kimo, of all people. And now the ball sits squarely in the court of Rickson Gracie. Will his family pride force him to avenge their losses in Japan? And realistically, how can Rickson fight anyone else, so long as Sakuraba remains available and willing? Rickson Gracie has two choices for 2001 - fight Kazushi Sakuraba, with the honor of his entire family weighing on his shoulders, or retire with his gaudy record intact. Either way, Rickson Gracie is one to watch for 2001.

Ken Shamrock

Unlike Rickson Gracie, Ken Shamrock can't rest on a cushy record of MMA dominance. Shamrock craves a legacy like the Gracies enjoy, the status of being a dominant fighter, but was never able to achieve that level of respect as an active fighter. Worse, his own younger brother, Frank, quickly vaulted to the pinnacle of the MMA world with a series of stunning and overwhelming wins over top competition, while Ken Shamrock's legacy to the average fight fan was a series of listless yawners with Royce Gracie (UFC5), Dan Severn(UFC9), and Oleg Taktarov(UFC7). His desire to be recognized for his combat skills is what drew Shamrock back to MMA after a successful and lucrative stint in the WWF, and he quickly scored a major win with a victory over BattleArts star Alexandar Otsuka in PRIDE. But three months later, Shamrock suffered his most decisive loss since Royce Gracie choked him into submission all the way back in 1993 at UFC1. Kazuyuki Fujita, a powerful Japanese wrestler who dominated Mark Kerr at the PRIDE Grand Prix, withstood some striking early and overwhelmed Shamrock, forcing Ken's corner to throw in the towel after only 6 minutes of action. Shamrock has the cushion of knowing that a job with the profitable World Wrestling Federation awaits him should he give up on his quest to achieve MMA greatness, but Shamrock seemed all too willing to leave his hurricanrana stateside for the uncertain future of real fighting. Ken Shamrock has a major decision ahead of him - it remains to be seen if he can truly compete with the current crop of younger fighters, or even if he can be successful at all outside of the relatively protected boundaries of Pancrase, where he achieved his greatest victories. I'll be watching Ken Shamrock in 2001 to see if his eyes drift towards Stamford, and perhaps a tag team with Steve Blackman.

Igor Vovchanchin

Why watch Igor, arguably the greatest striker in the history of MMA? Because Igor Vovchanchin is, in my opinion, the most exciting and dangerous fighter in the sporting world today, and is approaching the point where his dominance and championship status leave few doors left to break down. With the exception of his loss to Mark Coleman at the PRIDE Grand Prix (Coleman benefited from a far easier tournament draw, and even had his second opponent forfeit before the fight even started due to injury), Igor has continued the same path of brutality that he had in 1999, going 7-1 with 6 KO's, including wins over Kazushi Sakuraba, Enson Inoue, and Mark Kerr. Igor ducks nobody - he's quick to accept a challenge and slow to make excuses. His 'anti-grappling' techniques have revolutionized the use of striking in MMA, and unlike other vaunted strikers like Vitor Belfort, Igor has a remarkable well-rounded set of striking skills to fall back upon. His boxing technique is unparalleled in MMA, and his Muay-Thai abilities rank with the elite MMA fighters worldwide. To end my gushing commentary, I rank Igor Vovchanchin as the #1 Heavyweight MMA fighter in the world today. You should watch him in 2001 because you will, quite simply, be watching a man who occupies the same rarified air as World Champions in any other sport, despite his lack of official recognition in the fractionated world of MMA. If the Rickson Gracie v Kazushi Sakuraba fight ever does get made in 2001, no one is more deserving of facing the winner than Igor, with the winner being the true world champion, something that MMA honestly needs to expand its fanbase.

&&&&&& Cactus Jack vs. Vader - Halloween Havoc (10/24/93 - Texas Death Match)
(PHIL RIPPA)

I am probably going to be all across the board on this match but who really cares. I still haven't really figured out why WCW didn't put Foley over in this match. I mean it was a non-title match (A fact I kept missing until I finally paid attention to Tony) so it isn't as if they would have had to have had Jack as their champion. Plus, this was during the big Jack comeback from the injuries so it would have made sense to give him one clean victory over Vader. (By the way, Tony has a really comical line that went something along the lines of "Jack lost his bag, GOT IT BACK..." It really is perversely funny when listened to.) Now, come to think of it, Vader went over Sting in the non-title strap match so maybe they just didn't like the idea of Vader jobbing. This was the second of the "Spin the Wheel, Make the Deal" matches and WCW learned how to rig a wheel so they didn't end up with a Coal Miner's Glove match again. This match is really good except for that fucking ending. Stupid fucking tazer. The match is just as brutal as their other affairs and it is so from the get go. The battling into the grave is a little contrived but the blade jobs that results were pretty mammoth. Did I mention the tazer? There is the wicked sleeper reversal that was all sorts of hurty (it has come out in the wash that Jack was really trying to hurt himself with that one.) There are plenty of our nasty things too as Vader wasn't afraid to have his cranium cracked with some chair shots and Jack forgets that concrete has no give as he bounces off it a few times. Of course, there is the annoying 30-second rest period after falls, which means to win, your opponent had to be incapacitated for 40 seconds. I really don't understand what Texas Death Match rules they were following there but it was stupid. Man, this match even had a good looking Vadersault. And, oh yeah, the fucking tazer. I would have easily voted for this match, right up to that point where Harley Race zaps Jack with the tazer to keep him down for the 10

count. What is even worse than that was since you had seen shots of Race playing with the tazer, you knew it was going to come into play and you knew that it wasn't going to lead to anything good. I really don't know what the harm of having a clean finish would have done but this is WCW and logic never applied. That was really WCW's MO. Have really great matches with amazingly shitty endings. There other MO was to have really bad PPVs with one really good match so that people actually forget what a good match it was because it was emersed in such udder crap. FUCK YOU WCW!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

NEXT WEEK: GAEA! GAEA! GAEA! GAEA! GAEA! GAEA! GAEA! TORYMON! TORYUMON!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

Seven fists in the face of wrestling

^^*^*^*^*^*^*^*

Love me- right. What's the matter with you?

Hold me- tight. Why must I tell you what to do?

Smiling- smiling comes as no surprise

Hiding- what I see in your eyes

The story goes much deeper than the eye can see.

- You Got The Love, CHAKA KHAN